



PART A:	MATTERS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS
REPORT TO:	POLICY AND RESOURCES
DATE:	7 FEBRUARY 2020
REPORT OF THE:	HOUSING SERVICES MANAGER KIM ROBERTSHAW
TITLE OF REPORT:	RYEDALE REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT SCHEME
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the government's recently announced global resettlement scheme.
- 1.2 To seek Ryedale District Council's participation in the global resettlement scheme and to commit to resettling a minimum of 18 persons between 2020/21 and 2023/24.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Subject to on-going funding from Government agree to participate in the Governments new Global Resettlement Scheme for refugees. Ryedale District Council commits to participating in the government's global resettlement scheme and resettles 18 persons between 2020/21 and 2023/24.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The number of refugees worldwide is calculated to be the highest ever at 25.9 million¹ and since 2017 refugees have made up almost one per cent of the global population for the first time in modern history².
- 3.2 In June 2019 the Home Secretary wrote to Parliament to reaffirm the commitment to the resettlement of refugees beyond the conclusion of the Syrian Resettlement Programme (SRP) and Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) in 2020. A letter outlining the details was subsequently sent to Council leaders to seek local authorities' participation in the new scheme, as attached in **Appendix A**. Further details about the new scheme (provisionally called the 'global resettlement scheme') is attached in **Appendix B**.

¹ Source: UNHCR 19 June 2019

² UNHCR Global Trends 2017

3.0 SIGNIFICANT RISKS

- 3.1 Participation within the scheme is voluntary. Whilst non participation would likely result in some criticism it is unlikely to have any significant consequences for the Council. However such a decision would be at odds with the wider national, regional and countywide commitments
- 3.2 The Government are pledging long term support for the programme. However this report seeks a commitment from committee subject to funding being available.
- 3.3 The use of both private rented and social housing provides a greater pool of potential options. Payment of grant to cover housing costs also enables homes to be held empty pending the arrival of a refugee family.

4.0 POLICY CONTEXT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Council Priorities:
- Sustainable Growth – Enabling the provision of housing that meets existing and anticipates future need
 - Customers and Communities- Supporting communities to identify their needs, plan and develop local solutions and resilience

REPORT

5.0 REPORT DETAILS

- 5.1 Background
- 5.2.1 The global resettlement scheme will incorporate the current resettlement programmes (SRP, VCRS and Gateway Protection Programme) into one new 'Global Resettlement scheme'.
- 5.2.2 In 2020/21, the first year of the new scheme's operation, the government will aim to resettle 5,000 refugees.
- 5.2.3 In 2020/21 the grant provided to local authorities and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) will be funded at the same rate and for the same period as the current SRP and VCRS schemes (five years for local authorities and one year for CCGs).
- 5.2.4 The government has not been able to confirm the funding for arrivals after 2020/21 due to needing to await the outcome of the comprehensive spending review. The government has however declared its intention to run the new programme in the long term. Consequently the scheme is not to be seen as a one year's extension to the existing resettlement programmes but rather a permanent consolidation into one scheme.
- 5.2.5 The numbers of refugees to be resettled on a yearly basis beyond 2020/21 is thought to be unlikely to change significantly and the funding is expected to remain the same,

though it is not known yet whether inflationary cost pressures will be taken into account in subsequent years.

- 5.2.6 The geographical focus will be broadened beyond the Middle East and the North Africa region. This will also enable the addition of a new process for emergency resettlement, allowing the UK to respond quickly to instances of heightened protection need, providing a faster route to protection where lives are at risk. The numbers of refugees brought under this emergency aspect of the new scheme is expected to be a minor part of the overall number of refugees to be resettled.
- 5.2.7 The process for accepting refugees will be the same, with the UNHCR making recommendations to the Home Office, and the final decision resting with local authority.
- 5.2.8 The Community Sponsorship scheme (this is an NYCC scheme with no involvement from the Districts and Boroughs) will continue and the numbers will be in addition to the 5,000 refugees to be resettled in 2020/21 by local authorities. (To date in North Yorkshire one family (4 persons) has been resettled under the Community Sponsorship scheme and is not included in the numbers resettled by North Yorkshire local authorities.)
- 5.2.9 In the Yorkshire and Humber region, the regional partnership agreement between Migration Yorkshire and local authorities is likely to remain the same under the new scheme. The Refugee Council will continue to provide the integration support in 2020/21, as planned, but a procurement exercise is expected to take place at the same time to appoint an integration support provider for the longer term. This exercise will also provide an opportunity to re-model the existing integration support if required. Other regional commissioned support will also be reviewed.

5.2.10 Original offer, numbers arrived and remaining in North Yorkshire

- 5.2.11 North Yorkshire councils previously agreed to resettle a minimum of 197 SVPs and 22 VCRS (219 refugees in total), with each district pledging a minimum commitment based upon North Yorkshire as a whole taking one percent of the country's total. Scarborough Borough Council did not take part in resettling persons under the VCRS.
- 5.2.12 In the Yorkshire and Humber region the arrivals period was April 2016 to November 2018 but most local authorities except those in North Yorkshire continued to resettle families up to the present over and above their original pledges. North Yorkshire started in July 2016 and finished in February 2018, as shown in **Appendix C**.
- 5.2.13 The actual number of refugees resettled in North Yorkshire was 238 refugees in total (209 SVPs and 29 VCRS across 50 families), linked to the relatively large family sizes that we were allocated.
- 5.2.14 Families were typically two adults and three children. Most of the children were primary school aged. Seven families (34 persons) have since left North Yorkshire; the main reason being to live nearer to relatives resettled elsewhere in the UK rather than because of the rural nature of North Yorkshire. The latter risk was reduced by resettling a number of families within the same town. The nationalities of the VCRS families resettled were Sudanese and Iraqi.
- 5.2.15 Just under 30% of the families included family members with complex needs. The complexity of need varied widely from people with some mobility issues to severely

disabled adults and children including children with genetic disorders and life-limiting illnesses.

5.2.16 Experience has shown that where the bulk of families were received early on within a district's resettlement programme, it provided a stronger network for the families from the start. It was also easier to manage resources than having arrivals stretched out across several flights. However, the local housing supply and suitability of an area to resettle the families ultimately determined the pace of resettlement.

5.2.17 46 properties were used for the initial resettlement of the families, with three bedroomed properties in greatest demand as shown below.

Table 1: SVP: housing – North Yorkshire

	No. resettled (July 2016 to February 2018)	House size – no. of bedrooms					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
SVP	209	0	3	30	5		1

Table 2: VCRS: housing – North Yorkshire

	No. resettled (April 2017 to January 2018)	House size – no. of bedrooms					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
North Yorkshire	29		3	4			

5.2.18 There have subsequently been 11 house moves within the county, involving either the whole family or individual family members moving out of the original property allocated to them.

6.0 Families in Ryedale district: progress made

6.1 Four refugee families (21 persons) in total were resettled in June and July 2017, using four properties. There have been four house moves within the district since then due to the original properties being leased on a temporary basis. No families have left the district.

6.2 The progress of the adults in attaining a reasonable understanding of the English language has generally been slow. However this has been the case overall in the county and most of the adults resettled in the district could not understand any English when they arrived.

6.3 In all cases children were able to secure a school place at their nearest school or an alternative school within their local catchment area. The 16-19 year olds secured places at York College, providing them with a mix of English language classes and taster vocational courses.

6.4 As of September 2019 four persons are in employment. Their sectors of employment include horse husbandry, retail and the leisure industry. Another adult is due to commence a college course with a view to securing employment in hairdressing. A number of the remaining working-age adults are volunteering and are being supported to get into employment, with various options being explored.

6.5 Local volunteers have helped befriend the families and assisted with their language development alongside the more formal English language classes provided to the adults by the County Council. With assistance from the Refugee Council, volunteers have also been constructive in helping to assist the families with building up their independence and encouraging their participation in events in the wider community.

7.0 Participation in the global resettlement scheme: issues to consider

7.1 The figure of 5,000 refugees to be resettled in 2020/21 is similar to the commitments made by Prime Minister David Cameron in September 2015 and April 2016 to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees and 3,000 VCRS refugees in under five years. It is assumed that from 2021/22 onwards there will be a similar number of refugees resettled nationally per year as the 5,000 refugees to be resettled in 2020/21.

7.2 All local authorities will need to consider a formal proposal regarding participation through their normal decision making processes.

7.3 Informal discussions indicate that in principle North Yorkshire County Council will participate in the global resettlement scheme provided that:

- this is in partnership with North Yorkshire district councils;
- the funding is no lower than envisaged by the Home Office;
- all arrangements are similar to the SVP and VCRS programmes; and
- families are resettled on a phased basis across districts as happened on the SVP and VCRs programmes (because families arriving across more than three districts at the same time would result in a scattergun approach and prove difficult to resource; also resettling one or two families in a district within a six month period would not be affordable), as resources need to be targeted within a district at the same time

7.4 Based upon the experience of the existing refugee resettlement scheme across the county, flexibility by Members to allow housing officers to use a range of housing types, including where available social or council housing, will enable the resettlement of further refugee families to be speeded up. Ryedale have contacted letting agents within the private sector and there has been a willingness to work with the Council in finding properties, this would give an increased pool of properties across the district. Not all vacant property can be used, for example if police intelligence flags up that the local area would not be suitable to house a refugee family.

7.5 In Ryedale we will however look to the private sector as well as Housing Associations to assist us in finding properties.

7.6 Future arrivals would need to continue to be resettled in towns to ensure that they had access to the appropriate support services. Ideally if new arrivals were resettled in the same town in the district as our existing refugee families it would help to consolidate a support network between families and possibly improve retention rates.

- 7.7 The schedule of arrivals across each of the seven North Yorkshire districts has yet to be confirmed but will begin with resettling families in no more than three districts at a time. Resettlement would be over the space of several months in those 'pioneer' districts before moving on to the remaining districts once the former had reached their agreed resettlement number. For practical reasons it is not envisaged that a district will spread out its resettlement of families across each of the years 2020/21 to 2023/24 as this would be more difficult to manage and require a greater level of resource on an ongoing basis.
- 7.8 Careful consideration would need to be taken locally as to regards the country and cultural background of refugees being resettled under the new scheme from each flight and in relation to existing immigrant communities. In North Yorkshire there is not an established Sudanese community for example and as experience has shown, resettling only one family from a separate cultural background to other refugee families heightens the risk of that family moving out of the county.
- 7.9 There are a number of positive reasons for participating in the new global refugee resettlement scheme in North Yorkshire:
- On the whole the refugee resettlement programme has progressed smoothly in North Yorkshire and the families have settled in relatively well considering their past traumatic lives. The Refugee Council has commented that compared with some of the larger metropolitan areas in the region with more established Arabic-speaking communities, the refugee families in North Yorkshire have more quickly built up their understanding of the English language and their independence. 15 clients of working age are now in employment – eight are in full-time work and seven are in part-time work. A number of other adults have construction experience and so work placements are being explored to this end with a range of employers. Many more adults are volunteering to gain useful experience before entering the world of work. Two of our young adults started apprenticeships in September 2019 and a number of our other young adults (+16 years to 19 years) continue to attend college. This includes English language classes and vocational courses. In most cases children were able to secure a school place at their nearest school or an alternative school within their local catchment area.
 - There has been a good spirit of partnership working between the local authorities in North Yorkshire, the Refugee Council and the other resettlement partners such as Health and the Police. This spirit of co-operation and commitment would need to continue in order to ensure that the refugee resettlement for later arrivals was a success.
 - The refugee resettlement programme will continue to require up to a five year commitment of support to be provided to each family resettlement partners in relation to their various roles and responsibilities.
 - The current level of funding provided by the Home Office to local authorities is sufficient to provide appropriate levels of support to the refugee families resettled in North Yorkshire.
- 7.10 If there is agreement for some or all North Yorkshire local authorities to participate in the global resettlement scheme, it will be advisable to proceed on the basis that participation will be a longer term commitment than 2020/21. Locally, a four year

commitment to resettle refugees is needed for planning purposes. A review could then be taken towards the end of that period regarding future participation in the scheme. The alternative of having annual ('stop' 'go') decisions whilst waiting for specific government commitments about numbers to be resettled nationally would make it difficult to manage a resettlement programme locally.

8.0 Indicative numbers that could be resettled by participating local authorities

- 8.1 Under the current scheme, North Yorkshire districts as a whole resettled on average 150 persons (approximately 30 families/properties) each year from the start to the finish of the resettlement period in the county (July 2016 to February 2018).
- 8.2 Due to pressures on local housing and other local authority housing commitments, including the duties introduced under The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, a more conservative target of 50 refugees per year (approximately 11-13 families) is proposed to be resettled under the new scheme, rather than continuing with the higher average resettlement rate achieved under the current scheme.
- 8.3 50 persons per year from 2020/21 to 2023/24 would equate to one percent of the envisaged national programme. This is the same 'fair share' approach used for the SVP and VCRS programmes, given that North Yorkshire's population is just under one percent of the UK population. Using this approach, the number of refugees that would be resettled in each district is shown in the table below. To reach an average of 50 persons being resettled each year would require a minimum of two districts a year to participate and in some instances would involve three districts. The actual numbers resettled might be marginally higher than those listed below due to the need to match family sizes to specific properties.

Table 3: ONS 2018 population estimates

District	2018 population mid-year estimate by district	Percentage of North Yorkshire population by district	Refugees to be resettled in total 2020/21 to 2023/24
Craven	56,832	9.3	19
Hambleton	91,134	14.8	30
Harrogate	160,533	26.1	52
Richmondshire	53,244	8.7	17
Ryedale	54,920	8.9	18
Scarborough	108,736	17.7	35
Selby	89,106	14.5	29
Total	614,505	100	200

- 8.4 Ryedale Council would need to ensure that they were able to arrange to provide this supply of housing during their allocated time period. The schedule of charter flights is likely to be known some time in advance of families arriving, providing an opportunity for Housing Officers to have early discussions with national, regional and local housing providers to secure their commitment to the project.

9.0 Implications

A) Policy

No implications

b) Financial

There are no direct financial implications for the Council.

Costs associated with the resettlement of refugees are met by government grant. NYCC are the accountable body for the receipt and spending of grant monies, including the payment of eligible housing costs to the Council.

The proposed scheme does however have indirect cost implications. These include staff time. This cost is ineligible for grant payment and absorbed within existing staffing levels and workloads. This is welcomed by the housing team.

The government has not been able to confirm the funding for arrivals after 2020/21 due to needing to await the outcome of the comprehensive spending review. The government has however declared its intention to run the new programme in the long term. It is important to note therefore that participation by NYCC (and the districts) is subject to on-going funding from Government at the same levels as the previous Syrian Resettlement Programme.

C) Legal

This report seeks agreement to renew a partnership agreement between the Council the other districts, NYCC and Migration Yorkshire. That agreement shall set out the obligations of different parties.

(d) Equalities, Diversity and Community Cohesion

Overall however the learning from the first scheme (including from feedback from the Refugee Council) was that the welcome to the District from the community to refugees was warm.

(e) Planning

No implications

10.0 Next Steps

If approved the Council will work closely with all partners across North Yorkshire to ensure the scheme is a success and is welcomed by the community.

Kim Robertshaw
Housing Services Manager

Appendix One- Resettlement scheme
Appendix two- UK Resettlement Scheme briefing Note for LA
Appendix three- Schedule

